I shouted, "Everyone into the sleighs!"

Eugene shouted to the attackers, "Keep off or we shall fire!" And he shot into the air. The teachers reached the sleigh first, the Mensheviks followed them. Eugene and I covered the retreat with our small Brownings.

"Stop, you others, give up your guns!" barked Gerassim's voice in the darkness. "Take them, boys! Only these two have arms." Eugene expected me to fire, but I could not consider shooting at the peasants. I cried to Eugene, "To the sleighs!" We rushed to the nearest sleigh. The peasants were irresolute. They threw sticks, stones, and poles at us but did not dare come close.

When we were out of reach of the pursuers, Eugene asked me, "You did not wish me to fire?"

"No, you could not shoot into the air twice," I replied.

"Would it have been better if they had caught us?" he asked.

"We had to take the risk. How would you feel if we had escaped after killing or wounding somebody?"

After a long silence Eugene said, "You are right. One shot in the air was all we could afford in self-defense."

TRAPPED

We reached Chorino before dawn. Thomas had bad news for us. The rumors that strikers were touring the villages and compelling the peasants to take an oath to the new Tsar had spread throughout the district. Not all the peasants believed the rumors, but some villages were ready to meet the strangers with axes and pitchforks. Thomas knew that Chorino would not fail him, and most of the teachers who had attended the convention felt fairly secure personally, but the situation had become difficult in some places and our visit to these spots would only worsen matters. Thomas therefore advised us to cut our tour short, go back to the next city, and be ready to return on short notice. He invited the girl teachers to stay in Chorino in the meantime.

"You can stay with Lazar or with some other peasant family," he said to them. "Nobody will come to Chorino from your village to molest you."

We decided to follow his advice. It was not easy to find someone to take Zaloga, Alexander, Eugene, and me to the Borovenka station since all the peasants were at work in the communal forest. Finally a sleigh appeared before the teacher's house, driven by a woman in a man's sheepskin coat, felt boots, and fur hat, and we left Chorino.

Again we crossed the fairyland of sun and glittering snow with an